

# CHB Alumni Newsletter

*Spartam nactus es, hanc exorna*

Issue No.3 | Summer 2024



**KING EDWARD VI  
CAMP HILL  
SCHOOL FOR BOYS**

*Educational excellence for our City*

Welcome to the third edition of your Old Camp Hillian's newsletter



A Chronicle Memory from 2005

**Dear Alumnus**

Welcome to the third edition of the Camp Hill Boys Alumni Newsletter, it's almost the end of another busy academic year. We recently bid farewell to Year 11 and Year 13 students, who left the school following their GCSE and A Level examinations. Year 13 students' last days are always a bittersweet mix of celebrations and farewells as they either leave for the wider world or on to university. Although we say goodbye to them as students, we welcome them as our newest alumni.

We were delighted to welcome our new Year 7 students to a recent Induction Day. It gave them an opportunity to meet future class friends and new teachers. To ease the transition, they are invited to Summer Camp during the first week of the summer holidays. This event is always well attended and gives them the opportunity to make new friends during team building activities and share current friendships in a fun relaxed atmosphere.

We always enjoy hearing the successes of CHB alumni. Similarly, if you are able to support the school in anyway, be it speaking at a symposium, becoming a mentor, offering work experience, please do get in touch.

If you would like an individual tour or with a group of former classmates please get in touch,. You are always welcome back.

We would like to give a special thank you to those who agreed to make a contribution towards this bumper edition of the newsletter. We hope you enjoy reading it!!

**Camp Hill School for Boys Development Office**

## What's in this edition:

◆ Your Newsletter	1
◆ Headmaster's Welcome	2
◆ Development Manager Update	3
◆ Paul Bruten—A Fond Farewell	4-5
◆ Bob Lewis—Our Centenarian	6
◆ Camp Hillians Return	7-8
◆ Alumni Open Day	9-10
◆ Your Alumni Voices	11-13
◆ Take a trip down Memory Lane	14-19

## Birthday Congratulations

Bob Lewis attended CHB from 1934—1939. We know you will join us in wishing Bob the happiest of birthday's this July when he celebrates his 101st birthday! Here's Bob before he went out for a sail after celebrating his 100th birthday last year. Bob has sailed for over 60 years. Read more on page 6.



## Goodbye and Good Luck



Both staff and students are building up to saying a fond farewell and good luck to Paul Bruten, Deputy Headteacher. Paul will be retiring at the end of July after working at the school for over 35 years. Paul will be moving to Devon with his wife Jane. Read more on pages 4-5.

Development Office: [chbalumni@camphillboys.bham.sch.uk](mailto:chbalumni@camphillboys.bham.sch.uk)

# Headmaster's Welcome

Dear Alumni

As I write to you we are in the midst of the summer term, and while the weather has certainly been variable, the quality of the student experience has not. We have enjoyed a full gamut of clubs, trips and societies and currently the Year 11 and Year 13 students are focused on their exams.

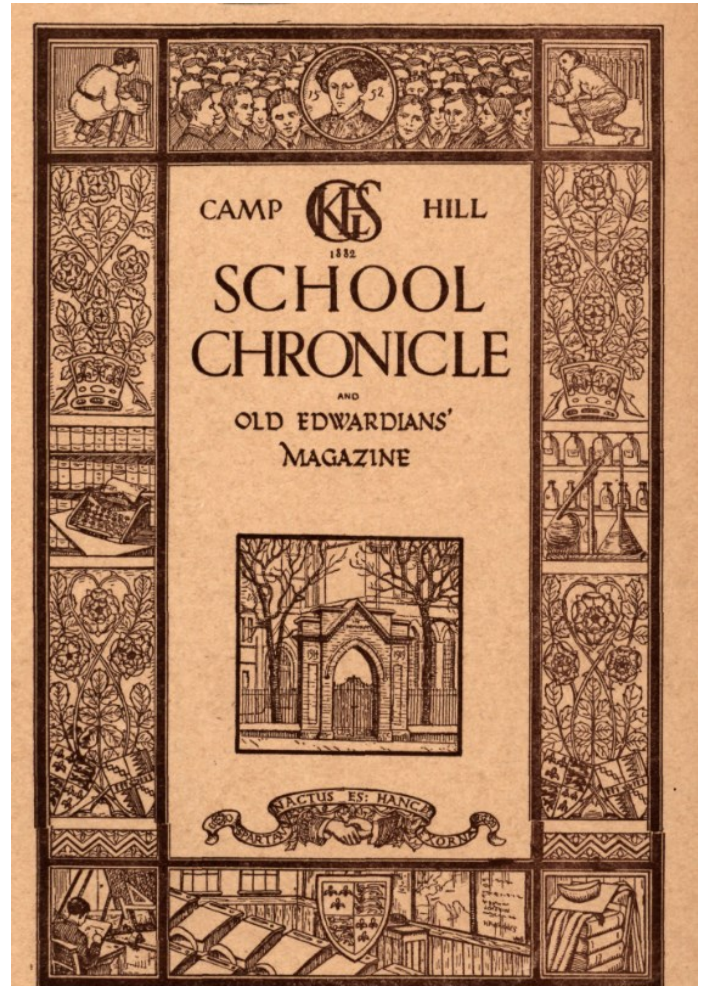
Camp Hill Boys continues a tradition of an unashamedly academic curriculum combined with a huge array of opportunities in sports, music, arts and drama. We were delighted when OFSTED officially recognised this back in November of last year and I am proud of this testament and to the huge commitment given by staff, students and their families. We continue to be "Outstanding" in every OFSTED category and I urge you to read the report.

I am also delighted to report that the school has amassed £3.6m of our £4.5m target to build the new Camp Hill Community Hub (CHCH). This project allows us to provide the much needed new classrooms, changing rooms, dining space, toilets and all-weather pitch, and will transform the education for all of our students to come. If you would like to know more, or to give a gift towards this campaign then please contact Leanne Beckett – we are now on the home straight!

I look forward to meeting as many Old Boys as I can over the next few months, so please look out for our Alumni events published on the website, and if you would like to arrange a private or group tour please get in touch with Leanne. It is a delight to see so many of you and to show you round your old school, and we know what a pleasure it is for you when you hook up with your old friends and teachers.

Best wishes

**Russell Bowen MA (Cantab) NPQH**



**If you would like to look at old copies of Vivat and the Chronicle check out the Foundation Archives below:**

[www.kingedwardvi-camphillforboys-archives.org](http://www.kingedwardvi-camphillforboys-archives.org)

**Calling all alumni - join us via the CHB Alumni registration page and keep in touch:**

[www.camphillboys.bham.sch.uk](http://www.camphillboys.bham.sch.uk)

The CHB webpage has been updated providing links to school news of interest to ex-pupils, with news of its own activities and hopefully over time an expanding archive of material of interest to Old Camp Hillians of every generation.

If you are a former student or former member of staff we would love you to register your details to bring everyone together. If everyone asks one or two fellow alumni to join us, we will soon grow an even larger CHB community together. We post regularly on LinkedIn so keep a look out for future reunions and events.

The cherry blossom and magnolia trees next to reception in full bloom in Spring—photograph taken by L Beckett



**Follow King Edward VI  
Camp Hill School for Boys  
on social media**



## Should I...

Should I give a friend a mention  
Or use punctuation  
Or crank up the tension  
To provoke a reaction

Should I take my time  
To make it rhyme  
Or put an awkward space  
In an awkward place

Should I use alliteration  
Or quote a quotation  
Or use a rhetorical question  
To make a suggestion

Should I make a stand and air my views  
Or give them a choice so they can choose  
Should I write an epic story of brave warriors of  
old  
Or write a tall tale of a man with a cold.

Should I add onomatopoeia like smash and boom  
Or should I add rhythm and make it a tune  
Should I shorten sentences for dramatic effect  
Or not.

I don't know anymore  
I'm all burnt out  
I don't even know what my poem's about  
So I'll go upstairs and rest my fears  
And hopefully I'll wake up with some good ideas.

*Ross Jones-Morris - 2007*

# Development Office

## Dear Alumnus

We've been very busy in the Development Office since the Autumn term newsletter with more of you getting in touch every week. If you haven't already done so please register on the school alumni webpage, we have almost 600 registered now.

At Camp Hill Boys we feel very proud of the school's history and of the achievements of our alumni. We consider our alumni to still be members of the school community and we are working to engage with and grow a living network of friends of the school.

Our alumni form the foundation of what makes Camp Hill School for Boys an outstanding school today. In November we further cemented this opinion when we achieved 'Outstanding' from OFSTED. Both staff and students worked extremely hard to attain this award and it's testimony to the hard work and dedication across the school.

Our alumni also serve as ambassadors of the school and their experiences and achievements become perfect examples of leadership, academic achievement, personal fulfilment and happiness to our current pupils who rely on the examples set by those who have gone before them.

Lastly, we had a terrific turnout for the CHB Alumni Open Day in June, thank you to everyone who came from near and far. Check pages 10-11 for photographs and comments following the event.

A reminder that the best way to reach me is by email [chbalumni@camphillboys.bham.sch.uk](mailto:chbalumni@camphillboys.bham.sch.uk) or via the [alumni webpage](#).

Lea

*Leanne Beckett*

**Development Manager & Pastoral Support**

## Old Camp Hillians

Old Camp Hillians instead of Old Edwardians was first mentioned in the 1910 Chronicle article below.

Old Edwardians is synonymous with King Edwards School (KES) in Edgbaston so we thought we would see what our Old Boys thought of Camp Hillians. Email the Development Office if you have a preference, we would be interested to know your thoughts? [chbalumni@camphillboys.bham.sch.uk](mailto:chbalumni@camphillboys.bham.sch.uk)

In conclusion may we venture to throw out a hint to Camp Hillians that after scaling the heights of their own school, there are higher points within the reach of most of them, and they will find many who know something of the climbing ready to give them a helping hand. There are attractions by the way, such as the High School Club, with its great advantages, including in addition to the usual sports, Swimming, Fives, and Chess, Natural History and Musical Societies; and last, but not least, there exists the Cadet Corps, a member of which has this year gained high honours at Bisley. There is also the chance of some of them finding the loftier peaks of a Varsity career.

I am, Sir,

Yours truly,

AN OLD BOY.

## Call for Articles

### Dear Readers

Our CHB Alumni Newsletter is distributed to all registered alumni, governors, donors and friends of the school. For upcoming issues, we would like to invite you to send us your articles describing your time at CHB :

- ◇ Your full name
- ◇ The year you left the school
- ◇ Your current/former career
- ◇ Your best memory of CHB
- ◇ Teachers who made an impact
- ◇ The influence the learning has had on your career

Please share with us your thoughts and ideas. We welcome contributions from all over the world! Please send your articles to the following email address: [chbalumni@camphillboys.bham.sch.uk](mailto:chbalumni@camphillboys.bham.sch.uk)

## ***A Fond Farewell and Good Luck Paul***



**Paul and his son James**

“Paul and I met as young teachers starting out on our careers at Camp Hill in the 1980’s when he joined the Maths department and I had already been at the school a few years. Little did we both know at the time, that we would go on to spend 30 years teaching together at Camp Hill. It was pretty obvious from the start that Paul was a member of staff who always saw his role extending beyond the confines of just teaching his subject in the classroom and it is testament to him that he has always been able to maintain this approach to the job, despite the ever changing educational climate and taking on additional responsibilities.

On reflection, there aren’t that many roles at Camp Hill that Paul hasn’t performed at some stage or other. Maths teacher, Games teacher, Form Tutor, rugby coach, cricket coach, Head of Seymour House, Ski Party Leader, St David’s Rock Climbing Trip Leader, Common Room Committee member, stalwart of CHAOS, Head of Maths and of course, Deputy Head Curriculum. I could go on....

As well as his undoubted expertise as a Maths teacher, Paul, a passionate Welshman, is a talented all round sportsman with a strong competitive edge. Just ask anybody who has played golf against him! An ever present in staff football and cricket teams over the years, but also an accomplished skier, golfer, climber and cyclist. I am sure that with a little more time on his hands, he will undoubtedly be pursuing all of these activities in the future.

Paul will be sorely missed at Camp Hill, not only as a respected colleague, but also as a friend to many staff. On a personal note, I have always enjoyed his company and valued his friendship. I look forward to meeting up with him and Messrs Cookson and Hardy on the golf course for our annual PE vs Maths four ball. Good luck in your ‘semi-retirement’, Paul. You have certainly earned it!”

**Chris Jones**

“How amazing and skilful is Paul Bruten?”

He was born and grew up in the Welsh Valleys. For many years, during school holidays, he would work for his uncle who had a building business and consequently developed many talents which, later in life, he would put to good use. A couple of jobs included moving the bathroom from the rear of their house to the front and completely refitting the kitchen. He is looking forward to completely renovating his next home, close to the coast in his retirement!

Also in his youth he developed a love for sport and was successful in studying Maths and PE at Birmingham University. Over the years he has developed into a multi-talented sportsman especially in skiing, golf, cycling and running to name a few activities. Generations of Camp Hill boys have benefited enormously from his talents... in Maths as well... haha !

However, one of his expert skills frightened the living daylights out of his colleagues who accompanied him on the annual climbing trips to St David’s. Each morning he would meticulously organise the ropes and climbing equipment to the safest degree so he and his colleagues could belay and top-rope the boys during their short cliff climbs. However, the scariest bit was towards the end of the day when.... ‘action man’ would be seen... free-soloing similar climbs... which is without ropes... and although he had explained to us that this was normal practice for climbers at a very, very, very high standard in order to improve their confidence and hence ability... it still terrified his colleagues, even after seeing him do it on many previous occasions.

Paul’s children are unsurprisingly experts in similar sports but hopefully not free-soloing! We hope that he continues to enjoy his activities along with other extreme sports such as... relaxing!?”

**Graham Hardy**

## A Thoroughly Nice Person



"I first got to know Paul when I joined the school in 2003, and he and I taught in the Maths department under Peter Jack's leadership. As well as being a great classroom teacher himself, he was an encouraging and helpful colleague to someone joining the department. In due course he became a superb Head of Maths and a few years later I was delighted when he joined the Senior Leadership Team as Deputy Head (curriculum). It's in that last role that most staff will know him. He was already extremely popular amongst staff, and they developed complete trust and confidence in him. To their faces he was kind and considerate. Behind their backs? Exactly the same. Whenever plotting a way forward, his mind was always on the effect on staff. He would never support a solution that was less than fair and reasonable; and he would only accept fair and reasonable if he couldn't achieve generous and helpful. That word, 'helpful', triggers thoughts of one of Paul's qualities that I found most valuable and of which I am most envious. The envy is for his ability to see how he can be helpful; he always goes one step further than 'can I help?' He thinks of a way he can help, before you ask, and proceeds to do it unless you stop him.

Paul was wonderful to have as a Deputy. He was by nature supportive; he advised and suggested wisely; if he disagreed, it never felt like criticism. He was utterly consistent, utterly honest, utterly trustworthy and yet never displayed the harshness that sometimes accompanies those traits. I felt enormously supported by his friendship.

My sons used to laugh when Mervyn Brooker said he wanted them to be 'nice', because it sounded weak to them. I disagreed. I said the thing I would most like them to be when they left Camp Hill was nice people. Paul Bruten leaves Camp Hill, as he arrived, a thoroughly nice person."

**Martin Garrod**

"It was the 1996 ski trip to Claviere, a ski resort which, linked with about 5 others, made the renowned Via Lattea in the Italian maritime alps. We had six staff accompanying the trip so I decided that we could afford the luxury of a day off for each of a group of three. Paul, Graham Hardy and I had the Tuesday to explore as much of the ski area as possible so, after an early breakfast, we set off via Cesana, Sansicario, Sestriere and Pragelato. It was a cold, fresh, perfect day for skiing and not inclined to waste a moment of this rare opportunity, we hardly stopped until we realised that the last lift across the valley was due to depart Cesana to Claviere quite soon. In fact, very soon. We 'raced' our way via any number of pistes and just made the last chair lift by a minute or two. A very close thing but as I look back to that day (and I never fail to do just that whenever I'm skiing), I can't help but think of the perfect skiing experience we had on that particular occasion. I will always remember the final run down to the hotel in Claviere and being asked by Keith Downing and Chris Jones on arrival, if we had had a satisfactory day and Paul saying "yes thanks but I could do with a quick power nap". Paul was well known as a "serial power-napper".

All I can add is that I attempted to reprise that same journey recently and almost completed it!!"



**Phil Carman**

**Paul and his son Jacob**

# Birthday Wishes to our Centenarian—Bob Lewis

After leaving Camp Hill in 1939 I went to BTH in Rugby to take an apprenticeship in Electrical Engineering, once completed and during the war, I found myself in Belfast working on the repair and maintenance of power stations.

After the war I returned to Birmingham, my brother Jack and I joined our Dad in his electrical shop in Kings Heath, Lewis and Hall, which we ran for many years developing the business from just the selling of TV's and white goods to TV repairs and all types of home electrical installations.



I was also involved in helping to re-write the fifteenth edition of IEE wiring regulations which meant trips abroad negotiating with other countries to get agreement.

In the early 70's I designed an electrical shower and together with an old school friend from Camp Hill, Geoff Farmiloe, we set up Dolphin Showers, where we manufactured the showers and sold and installed directly to the public. I worked at Dolphin until I retired at the age of 74.

Sport has always been an Important part of my life, mainly ice skating, tennis, squash, skiing and dingy sailing. During the 1950's I built an Enterprise Sailing Dinghy in my garage, but with nowhere locally to sail, in 1957 with some like-minded people, we managed to form a sailing club at Earlswood Lakes, finally getting on the water in 1961. Fortunately, there was enough land to build a clubhouse with full facilities. The club is still going strong today.



I have always enjoyed passing on my enthusiasm of sailing by encouraging youngsters to sail, many went on eventually to own their own boats and encourage their own children to sail. We also arranged sailing afternoons for visiting Belarus children who were suffering the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear accident.

Despite having 5 artificial hips (I wore 3 of them out) I was still sailing until I was 92. On my 100<sup>th</sup> birthday some members of the club organised to take me sailing on Earlswood, which I thoroughly enjoyed.

Sheila and I got married in 1948 and celebrated 68 years of happy marriage until she passed away in 2016. We lived in King's Heath and latterly in Earlswood, very handy for sailing! We have 3 children, 4 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren. I am pleased to say there are a few old Edwardians amongst my children, grandchildren and also nephews.



In 2000 to 2015 Sheila and I spent enjoyable times at St Patrick's School, where 2 of our granddaughters had been pupils, helping and listening to the children reading. I also helped the reception class to learn the basics of computers.

I am now living in Richmond Wood Norton Retirement Village and although am not fit enough for sport, have started a bridge club which seems to be popular, we meet twice a week and I am happy to teach beginners.

I will be celebrating my 101<sup>st</sup> birthday in July.



**Bob Lewis (1939)**

# Old Camp Hillian's Return



We recently welcomed back Chris Fitzgerald (2001), Chris gave talks to two year groups about his incredible career which included roles in the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office across the world. Chris is currently working for the Royal Household as Deputy Private Secretary to Their Majesties King Charles III and Queen Camilla. Peter Jack and George Cookson gave Chris a tour of the school and he met with some former teachers.



Martin Hyman (1982) recently returned and gave a number of talks to our year 9 students following National Holocaust Memorial Day in January (HMD). Martin gave students a glimpse of his own deeply personal account of his family during the holocaust and their subsequent life after the war. Students were visibly touched hearing what Martin's family had experienced and asked some thought-provoking questions at the end of the sessions.



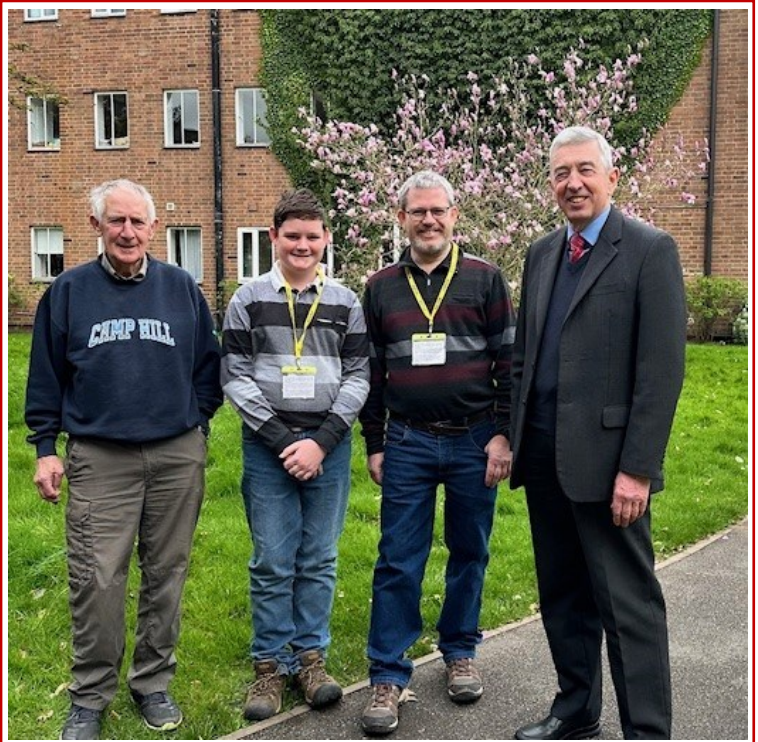
## Refer A Friend

We know that many of you are still in contact with friends that you made whilst at Camp Hill. We really want our Alumni network to grow and thrive so please consider passing on the link below to our sign-up page so that they can join the growing network too. [King Edward VI Camp Hill School for Boys - Alumni \(camphillboys.bham.sch.uk\)](https://camphillboys.bham.sch.uk)

# More Camp Hillians Return



Peter Bent (1973) and his wife were welcomed back before Christmas. They enjoyed a tour of the school with Peter and had an informal chat with Russell.



Nick Black (1993) brought his son along when he visited his former school recently. Nick lives in Australia. Whilst in the UK visiting family he arranged a nostalgic visit to CHB. He enjoyed meeting former teachers Peter and George, who took him on a sentimental tour of the corridors and classrooms and they spoke to Russell.



Rahim Rashid (2001) and Nawaz Mohamad (2001) recently visited along with Rahim's son, who is hoping to follow in Dad's footsteps by becoming a student at CHB one day in the future. Once again Rahim and Nawaz enjoyed catching up with Peter who took them all on a tour and they caught up with Russell before they left.



Senior and junior swimming teams with Mr Jack 1990/91



Thank you to Old Boy and friend of the school Saket Singhal (1985), who sent in this 1983 photograph of the school chess club.

We recently welcomed back Steven Clarke (1992), (top row, far right). Its been over 30 years since Steve was at school and he enjoyed meeting Mr Jack again along with Mr Cookson. Steve also caught up with old friend Andrew Caves, Deputy Head (top photo, blonde in front row) and Headmaster Russell.



# Camp Hillians Open Day



Camp Hill Boys School has grown over the past 140 years, from just 3 form groups to the current community of over 900 students.

Each year we wish our Year 13 students a fond farewell as they progress onto university or their first steps of their careers. And whilst we encourage them

to look forward and enjoy every moment of their new lives, we also hope that they will stay in touch with us. Therefore, the Camp Hill Boys alumni family of

students and former staff is

now in excess of 600 individuals from across the world.

To commemorate this outstanding achievement, Camp Hill Boys invited their alumni to attend an open day on Saturday 8 June. During the day the doors to the main building were thrown open to welcome its guests and within moments the air was abuzz with excitement as familiar faces poured in.

Camp Hill Boys students, along with staff past and present were greeted with handshakes, hugs and general high pitch fervour as stories were regaled of each individual's time at school. Some of the

mischievousness and humour of these teenagers' pasts were still evident as they toured the school buildings, peeked behind closed doors, reminiscing on lessons, school trips and maybe even the odd detention.

The tours included the sports hall, swimming pool and sixth form centre which was lauded for its great spaces and well-appointed rooms. Visitors were encouraged to sign-up for the Camp Hill Boys Alumni group on the school webpage.

It was truly touching to see the glow of happiness amongst everyone as they reconnected in such familiar surroundings. It is certain that Camp Hill Boys will not leave it so long until everyone is invited to meet again. The world doesn't seem such a large place after all.



**'DID YOU KNOW your school is a charity, leave a 1% legacy for the future boys of your school'**

## Welcome back...



I really enjoyed my return!



Thank you for organising Saturday. I had an amazing time. It was interesting to see all the changes since I left in 1977. Spent a fair amount of time with Peter Jack who was really good, please pass on my thanks to him.



I had a wonderful time with many recent leavers as they all had me as Head of 6th Form... and their memories, many of which were very funny, made it a special occasion. Head of 6th Form was the most enjoyable position I held in my entire career.



I very much enjoyed the event, and would like to thank you and everyone else who gave up their time to make the day so successful.

Please put me on your mailing list for future events at the school, as I would certainly like to attend if I can.



It was a wonderful 3 hours and a bit. Met up with one lad from my year and a boy from the year below us who I remembered.

Food was as good as ever, and it was good to meet up with some of the old masters. Mr Jack was excellent, wish I'd been there to have him teaching me 1963-1970.



## "Your Alumni Voices"

"My father had attended the original school in Camp Hill from 1932 to 1937 and my sister had just finished her A-levels at the girls' school next door in the summer of 1966 and so, as I remember, it was with some trepidation that I arrived at King Edward's Camp Hill on the morning of 1st September 1966 as an eleven-year old boy in short trousers, to join Form 1M in Room 7.

I made steady, but not spectacular, progress through my years at school, receiving what I think was a good general education. I had the privilege of serving as a prefect in my final year and left in 1973 with 3 average A-levels in Maths, Physics & Chemistry, which were good enough to gain me a place at Nottingham University, from where I graduated with a B.Sc. in Physics in 1976.

I then worked for a few years in an industrial laboratory until my chosen career path opened: I joined the Civil Aviation Authority to train as an Air Traffic Controller. I then spent the next 30 immensely enjoyable and satisfying years working in the tower at Birmingham Airport, from where I retired in 2010 on a Watch Manager's salary.

Some 50 years after leaving the school, upon my return visit with my wife last December, I didn't experience quite the same feeling of trepidation as in 1966, but I still wasn't too sure what to expect. I needn't have worried. We were made to feel most welcome by Leanne, who introduced us to the Headmaster Russell Bowen, and to our tour guide who was none other than Peter Jack, who had been my Maths teacher in the 6th form. We were treated to a comprehensive tour, which brought many memories flooding back of my time at the school, and it was interesting to see how the school had developed and expanded over the intervening 50 years, such as the replacement of the old gym and fives courts with music rooms (much better than the old Room 6 upstairs), and the new floor above the science labs. Another highlight was setting foot in the Staff Room for the first time ever!

So, a big thank you to Leanne for facilitating our visit, and to Peter Jack for his enthusiasm in showing us round my old school."

**Peter Bent (1973)**

"I left the school in 1993 and after trying university and deciding it wasn't for me, worked for a local IT company for almost 7 years before moving to Australia in 2001.

Coming back this year was amazing to see how much had changed, but also how much was still the same. It was incredible to see Mr Jack and Mr Cookson after all this time, and they gave my son and me a wonderful tour sharing some of the memories I had forgotten about so long ago. I am very grateful to the staff at Camp Hill for both their teaching and extra-curricular activities all those years ago, which have helped me become who I am, and achieve everything I have to date. To those who say "I'll never need to know that...." you just might!

I still remember in history being told "The French were revolting", the almost explosive Chemistry lessons, and the punishments dished out for forgetting to do litter duty, none of which would probably be acceptable today, but were all something that made the learning process fun, and instilled the discipline that is lacking in so many today. I would like to thank all the staff both past and present for continuing to offer such great opportunities at such an amazing school."

**Nick Black (1993)**

"I was at CHB between 1962 and 1969 and was in Seymour House. Therefore, my headmaster was Mr (ex-Squadron Leader) A Cholmondeley, AFC, and my housemaster was Mr JDM Wright. It was only after reading their obituaries, in 2002 and 2023 respectively, that I learned so much more about them. I had always wondered how the headmaster was such a gentleman, but brooked no nonsense, and what AFC meant. (That was on his business card, which one needed for any exeat from games or PE). His RAF service obviously prepared him for that. Mr C was the same age as my father, who also served in the RAF for 6 years, starting at age 20.

Apparently, Mr Wright was only 16 years my senior, yet he also seemed mature beyond his years. I remember him taking a group of us for a ramble through Dovedale one Saturday in 1964. I also remember him correcting himself promptly when he spelt "Beatle" instead of beetle on the blackboard.

I also fondly remember Messrs Mathews (1968 Ford Escort) and Greenaway (Ford Zephyr mk 4), who set me on my merry way in maths and physics respectively, at A level, and my middle school (4A and 5R) form master Mr Prowse (MG 1100), who tried to instil me with Latin. I did become an engineer.

My mother died earlier this year (aged 101) and I now have her copy of the school photograph from 1965, taken outside the old gymnasium (now the English and library block), at the end of which were three "fives courts."!

"Rose tinted nostalgia" indeed, and yes I do like cars!"

**John Mitchell (1969)**

"When I put my pen down at the end of my English O level in 1980, I thought that would be the last time I would ever be asked to write an essay by a member of Camp Hill staff. For nearly 44 years that was the case. Then, a few of weeks ago, Leanne asked me to write a few words about my recent visit back to school.

I came back to CHB as a volunteer for the Northern Holocaust Education Group (NHEG), to talk to 3 groups of year 9 pupils about my family's experiences in the Holocaust, and my mum's life as a Holocaust survivor. We spoke about the horrors of the Holocaust and how it impacted on individual lives and deaths. The pupils (not surprisingly) asked me some very insightful questions and seemed to really take on board the overall message of the importance of tolerance for all people and the need to combat racism (including islamophobia and antisemitism) wherever they see it.

It was amazing to see how much had changed in in the 42 years since I left and how much was still the same. The old cricket pavilion was still there but there were no fives courts and the gym had moved. But the uniform was the same, my old classroom was there, and even Peter Jack, my A level maths teacher was there – just now he looked significantly younger than me.

It was great to be able to give back to the school that had given me the building blocks for my life and for my career as a CFO. I think these words are now a few days past the deadline Leanne gave me. Somethings never change..."

**Martin Hyman (1982)**



"It's been 8 months now since my last visit to my secondary school, my alma mater in July 2023 and I sit down to write about my experience and feelings that day on a surprisingly, unseasonably warm (for the UK) mid-summer's day. I have taken my time to write this to allow me to reflect and digest what happened and to see if I would even recall the visit and the emotions it generated.

My prior visit was July 2022 and previously, I have over the years since 1978 when I graduated "stopped by" on multiple, infrequent occasions after having left for the USA in 1983. Why over the 40+ years have I been drawn to this Camp Hill sojourn, when so many of my classmates are reluctant to do so for many good reasons?

Is it because I have mostly wonderful memories of my 7 years, other than the first day of school when an older boy stole my cap in the playground and disposed of it somewhere, never to be found. Those marvelous years at an educational institution that is in my humble opinion, second to none (despite being pressured to apply and failing to get into K.E High at the time – life lesson: things happen for a reason). Is it because of the longtime friendships and close-knit bonds that I still possess today 50+ years on that have been positively impactful to my success and happiness. Several of us "lads" will meet with each other at the famed Red Lion pub across from school using my visit as the catalyst to catch up on our lives, retirement, parental challenges, successes, travels and as I have

personally experienced and witnessed, invaluable help in times of need. One example is during the pandemic, we had a regularly scheduled Zoom call every month to speak and help each other through that difficult period.

Or is it because I am in awe of many of my brilliant teachers and have maintained contact with two in particular over the years despite so many passing over time because just like me, they are real people with their strengths, weaknesses and terrific characters, experiences and stories and I thoroughly love spending time with them both in genuine authentic discussions.

Could it be that I feel obligated because I did coordinate and host at Camp Hill in 2003 (maybe the first time ever) the 25<sup>th</sup> high school (I know very Yank of me) reunion which is a very traditional US custom and social activity. And as a result of that highly successful evening brought together about 90+ lads (and lasses from Camp Hill Girls) from all over the world based on our connections on Friends Reunited, other pupil's personal relationships they had maintained over the years since we left in 1978.

Lastly, I do consider some significant portion of my success and happiness in life today can be attributed to those 7 Camp Hill years of hard work, dedication, goal setting, competition, success, failure and humble intelligence (I was not the brightest tool in the shed for sure). Those character-building values led to my American corporate world and small entrepreneurial business achievements. And more importantly, as a family man. Specifically, I believe cultivating personal, persuasive, influential, long term relationships is what it takes to accomplish the happy and successful life we all seek.

Many of the life skills I am proficient at such as lifelong learning, curiosity, knowing that it takes a village to be successful, travel, building strong, long term (20-50+ years) solid relationships, working together as a team were all fostered and nurtured at Camp Hill via academics, sport participation & extra curricula school activities.

And as I visited the school once more last March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2024 and review the photos of me and Peter Jack (see previous CHB Alumni newsletter) or the beautiful tree lined driveway of the girl's school entrance, it brings back nostalgic smiles of my youthful years and times. I can't help but wonder how different life would have been if I had not been accepted to Camp Hill. Where would I be and what would I be doing? Plus, the anticipation I always feel when I return to Brum and always plan my school visit, a drink at the Red Lion pub and hopefully, many more coffees and conversations with my memories of the past as well as the new ones to be made with the tenants of the present. Maybe it is time to organize another (46<sup>th</sup>) mini-reunion for July 2024 just like the 25<sup>th</sup> year reunion for those who graduated in 1978? Who knows? Please contact me at [veuedom@gmail.com](mailto:veuedom@gmail.com)"

**Dip Chandra (1978)**

"The message I had from the careers advisor as I was leaving Camp Hill in 1960 with my O levels, was basically "Birmingham is an industrial city, you should go into industry". Shortly after, at a party, someone said "plastics are the future, I can get you an interview with Bakelite." He did and I was hired, doing research on thermo-setting moulding materials - plastics. But I was not a good student of chemistry at Matthew Boulton Technical College, and left Bakelite after a short stint.

My next move was working for my uncle on a pig farm in Sussex. It wasn't the sharpest move, but it gave me time to enjoy the outdoors and think. This connection to nature was to prove invaluable in the future. I subsequently joined General Foods (then Alfred Bird & Sons), back in Birmingham. I gained commercial experience in a variety of departments and was eventually steered into marketing. This began a career in marketing, advertising and promotional consulting in London with Lyons-Tetley, Sharps Advertising and MS Marketing, working on everything from ice cream to cigarettes, pet foods to biscuits. It was wonderful, rewarding - and the people I met and worked with from every conceivable background were just terrific.

I'm not really sure what role Camp Hill played in all this, but as the first entry on my CV, it always guaranteed a foot in the door. I think the school provided me with curiosity, an ability to engage with anyone and anything, and most of all, I could "read" people and businesses new to me with confidence. None of this would have been apparent at school, where I was for the most part invisible, except to English master Cleak, who found me "a rough, coarse lout", thus ideal to read the parts of carpenter and soothsayer in Julius Caesar. But we never really understand, do we, quite how sound education and early experiences subtly make us what we become? I obviously can't speak for everyone, but Camp Hill made me feel connected to something strong and traditional, and by association more worthwhile. I didn't always take advantage of the undoubted expertise and quality of the teaching staff, but their super credentials must have rubbed off on me whether I liked it or not.



Illustration by Tom Whitworth

During my life I have frequently pondered the school song. I've never thought of myself as part of the iron heart of England throbbing beneath its sombre robe. But I've never stopped to rub my shin, and yes, luck is good, the prize is pleasant, and the glory is in the game, except in America, where winning is all.

This was proved when I moved to San Francisco in my late thirties and joined the then best Ad Agency on the west coast - Hal Riney & Partners - for several years. I was frankly amazed at the incredible talent and generosity of the people I worked with. At the end of the eighties I was partner in my own agency, and made the dreadful mistake of restoring an old 650cc Triumph motorcycle. I promptly wrecked it and myself. Had a near death experience, spent a long time in hospital, longer in a wheelchair, and swore to never smoke, drink, wear a suit, work in an office (I haven't) or live in a city again.

I went back to my strongest subject at Camp Hill - art. Mr Appleby had been a great inspiration, although I always felt eclipsed by the very talented Eastwood twins, who incidentally both ended up in California. So in the wine country north of San Francisco, I learned to draw and paint again, and became a wildlife illustrator and concept designer for museums and National Parks in the US. I picked up graphic design too.

With my wife, Jeri Lynn Chandler, we have produced natural history interpretive installations, created museum exhibits, published and illustrated books, designed packaging materials and suffered earthquakes and devastating wildfires just a bit too close to our home in Sonoma. So a few years ago we moved to Santa Fe, which is right now exquisitely beautiful in the snow. It's almost as old as England. Now we are learning a lot of new history, enjoying diverse cultures and still working.

I have great memories of acting on stage in lots of amateur and even a few professional productions both here and in England. I suppose once you've declared "Beware the Ides of March" in class 4A, there's no going back.

I've made mistakes, personal and professional. Let people down - even my own children at times. I don't do it anymore, and I think I work still, partially to compensate. And I think about school a lot too. Fogarty's yorkers that terrified some masters during the annual pupil/teacher cricket game. Boss Trippas driving his dad's Jag. French teacher Marsden telling Frank Busby and I that our French translation homework was remarkably similar in its errors - "I fear this is a case of the blind leading the blind." Graham Waterman and I suspecting that our music teacher Gillard was having an affair with the school secretary. Bishop and Abbot swimming like fish. 1M, 2G, 3X, 4A, 5F - my personal cipher. Does anyone remember how stunning Gwyneth Lewis looked in a Susie Wong dress at the social organized with the Girl's School next door? Prothero and Deathridge, what great fives players. Whichever boys played Andrew Aguecheek and Toby Belch in Twelfth Night were utterly hilarious. Sometimes we need to be reminded just how wonderful life has been. When asked about my house I still say Howard.

In one of my last days at Camp Hill, when work was over and we could relax, a science master, whose name escapes me, led an informal discussion. "Do you think that life is preordained? Or is it like a treasure chest, where you gradually unpack exciting and unexpected experiences?" I can't remember how the discussion went, but I now know that life is the latter.

Memories are always happier in hindsight, but happy nevertheless. Thank you school, for apparently making me well rounded without knowing it. I am so proud and impressed that Camp Hill is up there with the very best. And thank you to my parents, who showed me how to be kind, which I am sometimes.

Forgive the cowboy hat, it's de rigueur here. Spartam nactus es, hanc exorna. Up the Villa!"



Rosy Finch by Tom Whitworth

Tom Whitworth (1960)

# A trip down memory lane...



The MacDermid Chemistry Quiz Team

## The MacDermid Chemistry Quiz 2008

An excerpt from A Walker's account of the Quiz in the 2008 Chronicle...

Having won this competition for 5 years on the trot, the pressure was on the Camp Hill team to sweep away the opposition. With Year 11 veterans, Aled Walker and Nathan Brown, combined with the Year 10 dynamic duo of Staszek Welsh and Andrew Jeskins, the opponents in the quarter finals were



the wily competitors Wolverhampton Girls High. Having slipped behind through lack of Year 10 knowledge on the blast furnace, the team powered ahead drawing bond diagrams and won with almost a 20 point margin. Ironically, this would turn out to be one of our closest encounters.



The old library in 1952 above is now a meeting room and office. The new library was built over the old gym in 2008.



Sign Language Club

The Sign Language Club started in a dingy Maths room in 2004 attracting a measly 5 people. Gradually the club grew and attracted people from both the boys' and the girls' schools. In 2008 there were 40 people learning sign with 4 different classes held each week. A number of teachers tried to master the skill—Mr Hill learnt a few choice words in sign, not forgetting Mr Jack who also took signing lessons; he could successfully count to 10 on his fingers, although in multiplications, he got his hands tied up in knots!!

8 students passed the BSL Level 1 exam, a huge achievement which had never been done before at the school. Camp Hill toured the local community putting on concerts for primary schools, retirements homes and other community enterprises.



Photograph from The Chronicle 2006

Excerpt from Mr Cookson's article...

The support from parents for both senior teams has been excellent. The support is reflected in the number accompanying the party to Ireland. No person can say he has really been on tour until he travels via the minibus, sleeps on the floor on the ferry and makes the bleary-eyed trip through Ireland to the hotel. The Year 11 parents have still to earn this credibility.



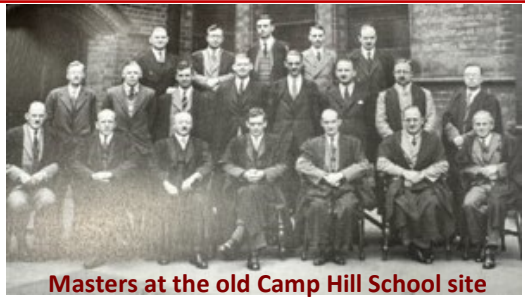
Former Masters of the School

## More Camp Hill memories...



U12 Rugby, The Chronicle 2006

In the final they played Fairfax, it was 5-5 at full-time so it went to extra-time. In extra-time there were a lot of good chances, but they did not convert any of them. Then the Fairfax big centre broke through the CHB defences, and scored the vital golden try. It was a shame not to win the cup, but the team played well throughout the season.



Masters at the old Camp Hill School site

## SKI TRIP

Once again over the new year (1986/7) the intrepid Mr Cookson led a party of skiing enthusiasts on a six-day holiday. This time it was to the French Alps. We stayed at the hotel 'Le Savoy' in the resort of 'Le Grand Bornard'. It was situated 200 metres up the mountain. From there it was a short walk past isolated chalets to the ski-lifts which climbed up the various slopes.

Each morning there were ski lessons. Each afternoon we were free to ski as well as our various abilities allowed. At the start and end of the week the weather was fine and the snow good but there was a bad patch in the middle where it rained and this made the snow slushy. Most people passed the ski tests on the last full day. They were awarded certificates and badges in the evening.



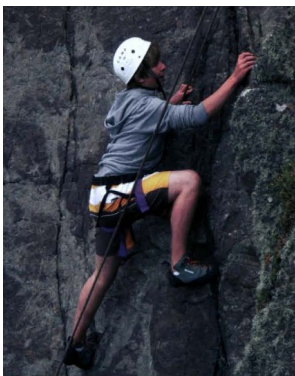
Best foot forward!

## St David's Outdoor Pursuits 2008



Once again, for the 18th consecutive year, we were able to introduce a number of boys to the challenges and demands of rock climbing and Mr Cookson's toast. Which one of these proved to be the most testing and ultimately the most memorable, is anyone's guess, but most boys survived to tell the tale.

We didn't have the best weather and suffered from persistent rain and almost storm force winds, but the boys never lost their cheerful and optimistic outlook despite all this. They climbed some challenging routes and progressed with alarming ease, showing just why, in completely alien environments, our boys can adapt and survive. We were very impressed by the determination and attitude of the boys and would wish to take this opportunity to congratulate them on an excellent effort.



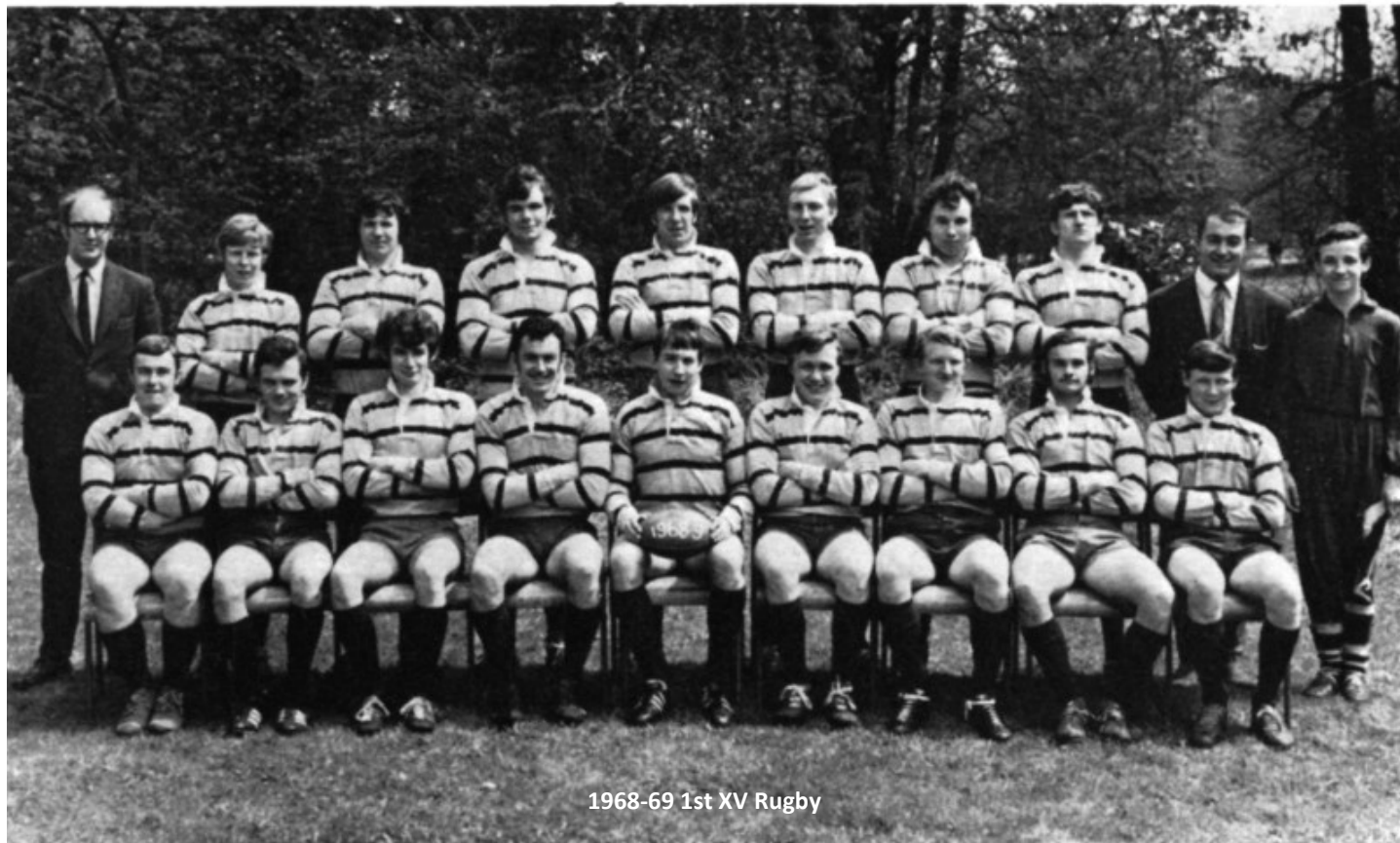
Unfortunately, due to the continuing awful weather, we had to finish the event rather prematurely, but we hope to find that the conditions in 2009 will be more like July should be! Finally, thanks to Messrs Bruten, Hardy, Downing, Cookson for their expert climbing tuition and toast. Sid, as usual, was in attendance as quartermaster general and this year John Dinham came along to add rather more professional skill to the photographic record of the whole event.



And even more Camp Hill memories...



### RUGBY 1st XV



Mr. J. G. Smith, A. R. Whitehouse, R. G. Gulley, W. N. Poacher, K. L. Inwood, T. P. Hall, C. A. Harris, B. H. Cope, Mr. R. J. Crittenden, K. Ward, A. Thompson, D. L. Jones, A. C. Savory, J. A. Lilley, J. R. W. Clayton, P. B. Watson-Jones, R. H. Brown, R. J. Jay, A. J. Bulloch

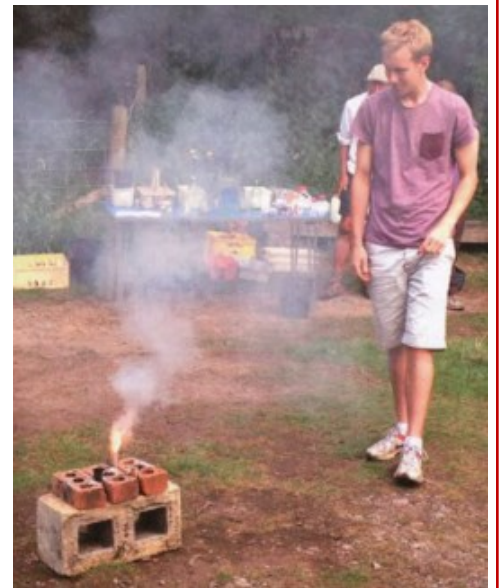
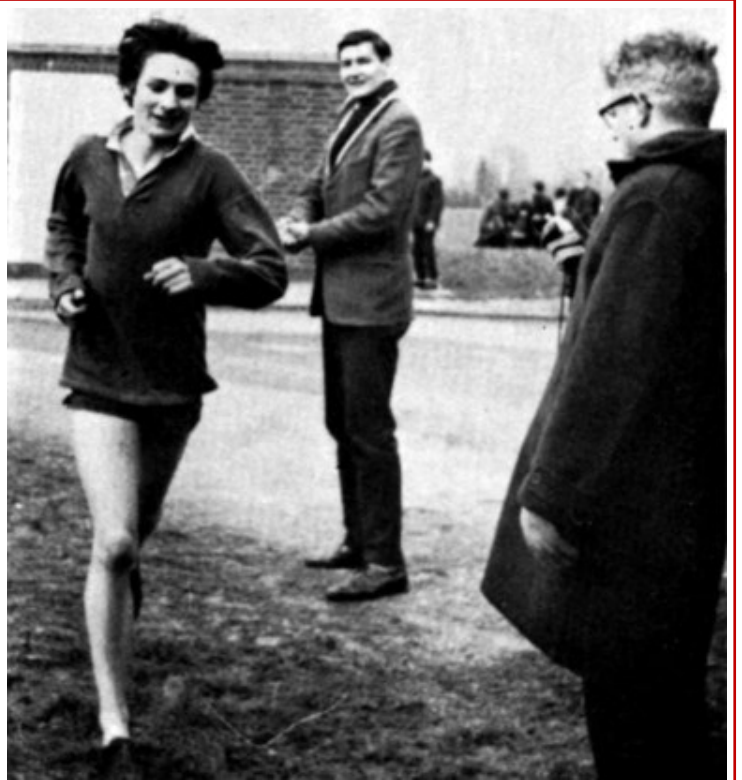
Even more memories...



**Cross Country 1968-1969**

The season started promisingly when the First Team won the Foundation Match, beating three of their league rivals. However, two defeats by Moseley in the first three weeks of the season ruined the Team's chances of league success.

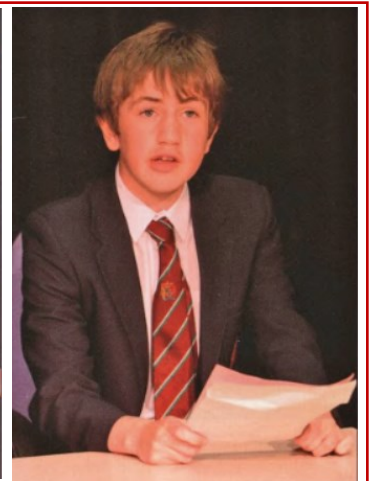
The First Team comprised of Bryan, Cole, Fairbotham, Flower, Hughes, Jacobs, Jeavons and Rider finished fourth to Moseley.



**Ecton Mine—2014**



**Media Day—2014**



**Many more Camp Hill memories...**



**Conway 2022**



**A motley crew — Mr Caves, Mr Cookson, Mr Thain, Mr Duncan, Mr Jones**

## More Camp Hill memories...



The CHRONICLE front cover 1986—87

### 1986/87: A couple of things happened this year

A potential change to National Curriculum proposals and early talks of GCSE's!!

The staff room extension and careers room were completed and Mrs Balkham started at CHB.



### UKMT/FMSP Senior Team Maths Challenge—2014

L to R—Walters, Moss, England, Smith

Teams finished in first and second place overall.

### Rock Idols—2004



The future of rock appears to be firmly in the hands of band, Hand over Fist. The band, consisting of Beasley, Samra, Jina and Dudley stormed to first place in the Birmingham schools Rock Idol competition. The competition featured bands from 10 schools, who performed to a panel of judges.

Their song 'Overcast' showed off the bands all round musical ability with drummer Beasley heading for a career in music, maybe we have just heard Birmingham's new super group.



U16 Basketball—2004

## LEAVING A LEGACY

*Regardless of the size, legacy gifts are vital in helping charities like The Schools of King Edward VI in Birmingham to be able to continue their work in investing in top quality education and facilities meeting the needs of our future generations. After providing for your family and friends you may wish to leave a charitable gift in your will to support the continued development of CHB.*

## KEEP IN TOUCH

*We're always keen to keep in touch with the Camp Hill School for Boys alumni community. Whether it's memories of your school days, stories of your travels, career details or reunions.*

*Please email [chbalumni@camphillboys.bham.sch.uk](mailto:chbalumni@camphillboys.bham.sch.uk) with your news*

**"A caring and inclusive community where everyone  
can do and be their best"**

